



ELECTION FOCUS 2008



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Presidential Spouses Play Important Role in American Politics (07-10-2008)

Will Cindy McCain or Michelle Obama be the next first lady of the United States?

One of the highest-profile jobs in U.S. government comes with no official duties, no paycheck and is awarded based on family connections. But first lady of the United States is a job with almost limitless possibilities. During their husband's terms, Eleanor Roosevelt wrote a daily newspaper column and hosted a weekly radio program, and Claudia "Lady Bird" Johnson promoted environmental conservation. Current first lady Laura Bush has championed women's rights and promoted reading programs. Each brought her personal style and passions to a post Patricia Nixon, wife of President Richard Nixon, described in a 1972 news conference as "the hardest unpaid job in the world."

Internet Revolutionizes Campaign Fundraising (07-10-2008)

Successful fundraising efforts appeal to average people online

Electioneering changed in the 2004 presidential campaign when Democratic contender Howard Dean used the Internet as his staging ground and the public responded by donating time and money. Four years later, Internet fundraising has leapt ahead, with prospective Democratic presidential nominee Barack Obama enjoying particular success thanks to Web 2.0 interactive and social networking tools that enhance online community participation. Obama is not the only candidate cashing in on the Internet. Former Republican presidential candidate Ron Paul drew extraordinary support with an online campaign that thrived even though the mainstream news media mostly ignored him. In one day in November 2007, Paul raised \$6 million, more than \$4 million of it online. McCain recently pumped more energy into his Internet campaign, using e-mail and blogs and his own social network, McCainSpace, to draw support. His daughter Megan maintains a blog to attract young potential voters.



The Internet helped presidential candidate Barack Obama, shown addressing supporters in Portland, Oregon, build support and funding.



Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton campaign together in Unity, New Hampshire

Obama and Clinton Campaign Together To Unify Party (07-01-2008)

Presumed Republican nominee John McCain touts energy proposals

After months of competing for the presidential nomination, Democrats Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton campaigned together June 27 to display party unity in the town of Unity, New Hampshire. The symbolism of Unity went beyond its name: In New Hampshire's Democratic primary each candidate received 107 votes from Unity residents. "Unity is not only a beautiful place, it's a wonderful feeling, isn't it?" New York Senator Clinton said. "I know what we start here in this field of unity will end on the steps of the Capitol when Barack Obama takes the oath of office." "Today we look back at the votes that took place here in the snows in January, 107 votes for Senator Clinton, 107 votes for me," Obama said. "But now we look at them as 214 votes for change here in America."

Blogs at America.gov - CAMPAIGN TRAIL TALK

<http://blogs.america.gov/campaign/>

Provides running commentary and information on the 2008 elections in the United States. This blog keeps readers up to date on news, rumors and political chatter surrounding thousands of political races. Readers may ask questions about the electoral process, post their comments about the candidates, and generally guide the discussion.

From the blog:

[Change of plans for Obama's acceptance speech](#)— By [Michelle Austein](#), 7 July 2008

On the final night of a party's political convention, after delegates and superdelegates have cast their votes, the presumed nominee becomes the official nominee and delivers an acceptance speech. In the past, the speech has been given at the convention site and, since the mid-20th century, also broadcast nationwide on television. Today presumed Democratic nominee Barack Obama's campaign said their candidate will do things a little differently. Instead of accepting his party's nomination at Denver's Pepsi Center, site of the Democratic National Convention (DNC), he will give an acceptance speech at the nearby Invesco Field, home to the Denver Broncos, the city's American football team.

[McCain's Colombia trip well-timed](#) — By [Michelle Austein](#), 3 July 2008

It might seem odd for presidential candidates to take time away from campaigning stateside, but traveling overseas is an important way for the presumed presidential nominees to show Americans they are ready to handle complex international issues. On July 2, presumed Republican nominee John McCain found himself near the center of breaking international news in Colombia.

For more information, see the Associated Press report on [YouTube](#).

Daily updated information is available at a special **U.S. Elections page** at:

<http://uspolitics.america.gov/uspolitics/elections/>



POLLS

[The Faith Factor in the Media's Primary Campaign Coverage](#) - Pew Research Center, July 10, 2008

As the historic 2008 presidential primary season came to an end, the presumptive Republican and Democratic nominees faced similar dilemmas. Both Republican Sen. John McCain (Ariz.) and Democratic Sen. Barack Obama (Ill.) decided to sever ties with controversial religious figures who had been backing their campaigns.

[THE MAP: The Crystal Ball's First Look at November's Electoral College](#) - Center for Politics, July 10, 2008 ... except for the guessing game about the vice presidential nominations, there's no greater fun to be had in July. So the *Crystal Ball* is pleased to unveil our best estimates more than four months before the balloting. As always, we'll be revising the map all the way up to the campaign's end.

[Obama Gaining Among Voters With Less Formal Education](#)- Gallup Poll, July 9, 2008

Since March, Obama has become increasingly competitive with McCain among men and women with less formal schooling, as well as among white and nonwhite voters who did not attend school beyond 12th grade. Among each of these subgroups of voters, the Obama-McCain gap has moved 6 or 7 points in Obama's favor over the past four months.

[Daily Presidential Tracking Poll](#) - Rasmussen Reports, July 9, 2008

[Most Americans Say Balanced Budget Good for Economy but Question if McCain Can Achieve it by 2013](#) - Rasmussen Reports, July 8, 2008

Seven out of 10 Americans (70%) think a balanced budget is good for the economy, but nearly as many (64%) believe it unlikely that John McCain can achieve such a budget by 2013 as he has promised.

[CANDIDATES BY THE NUMBERS](#) - Rasmussen Reports, July 8, 2008

CAMPAIGN 2008



TIME TO CHANGE THE UNIT RULE: And avoid a potential electoral calamity - Center for Politics, July 10, 2008 ...It's early, but right now John McCain is doing well in New Hampshire (4 electoral votes), which President Bush lost in 2004. Barack Obama is doing well in Colorado (9), Iowa (5), and New Mexico (5), all of which John Kerry lost in 2004. If those four states switch sides, with the other states remaining where they were on election night four years ago, then the Electoral College is tied: 269 to 269. It's easy to imagine that this scenario could occur. What is unimaginable is what happens afterwards.

Media Heat Wave - Pew Research Center, July 9, 2008 ...If we are in the summer doldrums -- the period when campaign-weary Americans tend to choose the beach and fireworks and tune out politics and campaigns -- that might be good news for Barack Obama and John McCain. Because last week's campaign narrative sure didn't offer much that was positive.

McCain's Speech to United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) Convention Washington, D.C. - Real Clear Politics, July 8, 2008 ... It is a terrible mistake to raise taxes during an economic downturn. Increasing the tax burden on Americans impedes job growth, discourages innovation and makes us less competitive. Small businesses are the biggest job creators in our economy. Keeping individual rates low isn't intended as a favor to wealthy Americans...

Obama's Agenda for Middle-Class Success - ... Real Clear Politics, July 7, 2008 ...The first step is to offer immediate relief to families who are struggling right now while helping to jumpstart economic growth and create jobs. Between a sluggish economy and gas prices rising above \$4 a gallon, the American people cannot wait another six months for help...

Obama, McCain Look West as Political Battlegrounds Shift - PBS (Public Broadcasting Service), July 7, 2008 ... Sen. Barack Obama hopes to win four Western states -- Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada and Montana -- in November, but Sen. John McCain is campaigning hard to hold on to the GOP strongholds. Pollsters offer insight.

Candidate Issue Index: Fiscal Responsibility - The Brookings Institution, July 2, 2008
Compiled by Brookings Institution experts, this chart is part of a series of issue indices to be published during the 2008 Presidential election cycle. The policy issues included in this series were chosen by Brookings staff and represent the most critical topics facing America's next President. Available voting records and statements vary based on time in office. For candidates who have not been a Member of Congress, public statements are noted when available.

Money in the 2008 Elections: Bad News or Good? - The Brookings Institution, July 1, 2008
The decision by presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Barack Obama to decline the public grant of \$84 million for his general election campaign has been widely viewed as, and harshly criticized for, administering the final death blow to the presidential public financing system. That system, rightly considered the crown jewel of public financing in American elections, was set up in 1974 as part of extensive amendments to the Federal Election Campaign Act and has been a central feature of presidential elections ever since.

Election Calendar

2008 Presidential Primary Dates and Candidate Filing Deadlines for Ballot Access (pdf)



Republican National Convention

**September 1-4, 2008,
Minneapolis -Saint Paul, Minnesota**

Democratic National Convention

**August 25-28, 2008
Denver, Colorado**



ARTICLE ALERT

Candidates Think Flip-Flopping is the Only Way to Win Elections. By Evan Thomas, *NEWSWEEK*, Vol. 152, Iss. 2, July 7-14, 2008. By forgoing federal funding (and abandoning a pledge to first discuss the matter with his opponent), [Barack Obama] will likely be able to outspend [John McCain], who is staying within the limits, by about four to one. Obama called the campaign-finance system broken and insists that he relies on small donors. [FULL TEXT](#)

How America Decides. By Amy Sullivan. *Time*. New York: July 14, 2008. Vol. 172, Iss. 2; pg. 32 ... Republicans have cut into that advantage by appealing to Catholics on social issues, a courtship that culminated in George W. Bush's victory in 2004 The TIME poll confirmed that a majority of Catholics (59%) can be broadly defined as pro-life (opposing abortion except to protect a woman's life or health or in cases of rape or incest). [FULL TEXT](#)

PLAYING POLITICS WITH YOUR PORTFOLIO. Investors can profit in a Presidential election year if they learn to read the tea leaves. By Christopher Farrell. *Business Week*. July 07, 2008., Iss. 4091; pg. 66 One way investors try to play the election year in a focused way is through political portfolios Wall Street firms tend to roll out as the first Tuesday in November nears. These are simply lists of stocks in industries pundits think should become more profitable based on who becomes No. 44. One way to track how the election is going -- and thus industries that may be most affected -- is through political prediction markets.

CAN EMILY'S LIST GET ITS MOJO BACK? Bara Vaida and Jennifer Skalka, *The National Journal*, June 28, 2008. The storied Democratic women's political action committee is looking to rebound from losses in 2006 and Hillary Rodham Clinton's failed White House bid. [FULL TEXT](#)

MICHIGAN: THE DEPRESSED STATE. Alexis Simendinger, *The National Journal*, June 28, 2008, n.p. The Wolverine State is reeling from a one-two punch on jobs and housing. This is the second in a series of articles taking a close look at the swing states likely to determine the outcome of this year's presidential election. [FULL TEXT](#)

Plus - [Google News](#) as well as [Yahoo News](#) on **Elections** updated continuously

UPCOMING EVENTS



Join the second Elections 08 online simulcast hosted by the U.S. Embassy London on: "Politics and Pundits: The Influence of the Media on Elections and Democracy" led by John Lloyd, Financial Times

The expert panel will examine what impact talk media may be having on the 2008 U.S. election campaign.

Date & Time: July 16, 2008, 1:30p.m. EDT (17:30 GMT; 18:30 London)

Please note:

The U.S. State Department – IIP (International Information Programs) - is planning to produce and post materials explaining what happens during the transition of the U.S. presidential administrations. We would welcome your thoughts about what you would find most useful.

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